



Gator Times

USS NASSAU (LHA 4)

March 17, 2006

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NASSAU Welcomes MCPON



USN photo by PHAN Amanda Clayton.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/AW) Terry Scott speaks to USS NASSAU Sailors on March 12. Scott awarded Enlisted Surface and Aviation Warfare Specialist pins to nearly 80 Nassau Sailors during his brief visit to the ship.

Concentrating on the Training Ahead of Us

By CMDCM(SW/AW) R. Makowski

As I prepare my column for this issue of the Gator Times, we have retrieved all the Marines of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit and their equipment, and are now heading for our next exercise. Every hour we travel puts us a little bit closer to the east coast of the good old USA.

Although we have another exercise to complete, we will all breathe just a little bit easier knowing that our friends and shipmates are not in harm's way any longer. Now we can concentrate on the long training road ahead of us. We must spend as much time as we can fit into the schedule preparing and honing our skills, as well as identifying and repairing as many ship discrepancies as possible. We must complete our training

review on the trip home across the Atlantic at the end of next month. How well we do will help determine how much we will have to add to our already extremely busy summer.

As we enter the last third of our deployment, it has been over 40 days since our last port visit. I see the crew at the most difficult portion of the deployment. Tempers are at their thinnest, work is just a little harder to concentrate on. This above all else is where you see what your crew is made of, when each Sailor and Marine reaches inside themselves and maintains that self control and pushes themselves to stand that next watch, complete the repairs to the CHT system, complete the repairs on or moving aircraft, or even to get up and begin another 18 hour day cooking for the crew.

If mom and dad back home could see what I see every day, they would be very proud of their son or daughter. This is where being a team has its greatest meaning. Each shipmate digs deep inside and says to themselves, "If I don't do my part someone else will have to cover for me and we can't afford that." It is just so impressive to see them go at

it day after day, knowing that May is coming soon. Keep up the great work, Team NASSAU – your work is noticed!

As we get closer to our completion of the deployment, I would be remiss if I did not warn all those loved ones back home that your particular Sailor may not want to eat chicken for a while after they return. Although our Culinary Specialists prepare well balanced meals daily, and regularly offer many different choices of dishes, it seems chicken is a staple onboard. Some times I feel I am going to start growing feathers! So please take my word and don't prepare chicken for the welcome home dish!

As I close out this issue, I would like announce that NASSAU was the winner of the Battle Efficiency (Battle "E") award for last year. An award given to one ship in its class on each coast every year. Competition is extremely keen for this annual award, and NASSAU Sailors stepped up and proved that they were the best. Congratulations to all and well done!

As always, please continue to double your efforts to concentrate on the job at hand, pay attention and complete the job the right way the first time.

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Sailors Welcome New Uniforms

By JO3 Arif Patani

Sailors aboard the USS NASSAU will soon wear a new uniform. According to a press release from Task Force Uniform (TFU) Public Affairs, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen approved plans for a single working uniform for all ranks and a year-round service uniform for E-6 and below Sailors. Mullen's approval came after a comprehensive briefing with Task Force Uniform Feb. 24.

Based on TFU's recommendations, Mullen approved the production of both a Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) style working uniform for all Sailors E-1 to O-10, and a year round service uniform

for day-to-day classroom and office-like environments.

"I'm really looking forward to the new uniforms," said IS2

Chris Fredricks, Nassau's Joint Intelligence Center Supervisor. "Utilities re-

See "New Uniforms," page 7.



The End of the Tunnel

By Chaplain David McElwain

Let's see, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Hump day, there is still Easter to go. Yes, we are getting close to the end of the deployment. You may not be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel yet, but you will soon.

Activities will begin to go into high gear. Planning for homecoming has started and preparations will soon follow. The right outfit has to be selected for the event ... we know what we will wear, but we wait to see what you, our family members, will wear.

Emotions begin to fluctuate at this point. When all is said and done we will have spent six months apart. How has he changed? What is different about her? In six months there are changes, but that would happen even if we had not been deployed.

If you have been communicating, writing snail mail or e-mail or making phone calls you should know most of what has happened during the deployment. Your communication gave you the opportunity to let your relationship deepen and grow. Hopefully you shared your feelings, your values and your hopes with each other.

Chaplain's Corner



Daring to dream about the future makes many relationships stronger. Communication helps you recognize your commitment to each other.

Amid all the frenzy of homecoming you can meet the person you have gotten to know more fully on the pier. The only surprise may be how well their uniform fits after the cruise. If you are not communicating regularly there is still time to start before you come out of the tunnel into the light.

MCPON Visits NASSAU on Deployment

By JO1 Ardelle L. Purcell

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) (SS/AW) Terry Scott presented Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist and Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist Pins to more than 70 Sailors aboard USS Nassau during a brief visit to the ship March 12.

"How's the mighty warship Nassau doing?" Scott asked while addressing more than 1,000 Sailors assembled in the Hangar Bay for awards quarters. "I can't tell you how much of a privilege it is to be here again.

"The very first thing I want to do is say thank you," said the MCPON. "Thank you for what you're doing, the work you're doing, the effort you're putting in, the sacrifices you're making for the Navy, this nation and for this ship."

The appreciation shown by the Navy's senior enlisted Sailor was also felt by many Nassau Sailors.

"It was a very good thing for the MCPON to do," said OS1(SW) Carey Bunch, Jr. "He took time out of his busy schedule to come see about us, his shipmates. He showed concern for those of us out here fighting the war against terrorism. I am very



USN photo by PH3 Andrew King.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Terry Scott speaks with Marines as he tours USS NASSAU's gym.

thankful that he came out here. It means a lot to me."

Nassau deployed in November 2005 on a regularly scheduled six-month deployment. Since then, the crew has successfully conducted anti-piracy operations off the coast of

Somalia and has continued to conduct successful maritime security operations in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf.

Nassau's success has recently been recognized with the ship earn-

See "MCPON," page 8.



Nassau Wins Prestigious Battle “E”

By PH3 Andrew King

Sailors on board the Navy’s Top Gator received welcome news March 11 when CAPT Michael W. Brannon, their Commanding Officer, announced over the ship’s 1MC that Nassau had won the Battle “E” award for only the second time in the ship’s history.

The announcement came while crew members completed the backload of elements of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (22MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC) in the northern Arabian Gulf. Nassau is currently conducting Maritime Security Operations in the 5th Fleet Area of Operations.

“This crew worked hard to get where they are right now, and they deserve this award,” said Brannon. “They should all be proud of what they have accomplished.”

Nassau was awarded the Battle “E” after being selected as the top large deck amphibious assault ship on the East Coast. The Battle “E” award is presented to commands that prove their expertise in four categories of battle efficiency: maritime warfare; engineering/survivability; command and control; and logistics. The categories were graded over a 12-month period as Nassau performed several inspections and exercises during many underway periods. Upon completion of the observation period Nassau was compared with other ships in its category, and came out on top.

“I feel lucky because I didn’t think we were going to get the award,” said GM3(SW) Demetrius Sullivan of Weapon’s G2 Division, a first-time recipient of the Battle “E”. “This has been a great year for me because I completed boot camp, reported to Nassau, picked

up GM3, earned my surface warfare pin, and now I have a Battle “E” to wear on my chest.”

With the award also comes the right to paint a white letter “E” on Nassau’s superstructure, showing the rest of the Navy why the ship is known as the Navy’s “Top Gator.” Nassau Sailors are also authorized to wear the Battle “E” ribbon for the remainder of their time in the service.

“It’s great because all the hard work the crew has been doing on this ship is being recognized outside our chain of command,” said LCDR Wes Daugherty, Air Department’s Aircraft Handler. “It’s nice to see that others see how hard we’re working, and they are rewarding that hard work.”

As Nassau prepares to return to Norfolk, Va., this award adds to a long list of accomplishments that the crew can share with family and friends.

Nassau’s Photo In The Spotlight



USN photo by PH3 Andy King.

No, they’re not trying to undo the world’s worst knot. Seaman from Nassau’s Deck Department prepare to send a pallet of line back to USNS Niagara Falls (T-AFS 3) during a recent connected replenishment.



After completion of successful Iraqi mission, NASSAU welcomes back 22nd MEU(SOC) Marines.

Left: SN Olutomi Osifowora from Beach Master Unit Two, Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va., directs Landing Craft, Utility One Six Six One (LCU-1661) on to Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait, to transport Marines and their equipment back to Nassau. Below: Marines arrive back on board NASSAU after more than two months in Iraq. "It feels pretty good to be back," said Cpl. Jason White of BLT 1/2 Alpha Company. "I wish we could skip the ports and head straight home." Marines conducted constant patrols on Iraqi streets and provided security for Army units currently stationed there. "We worked hard everyday we were there. I'm not looking forward to going back, but if I had to - I would," said White.



USN photo by PH2(AW) Susan Milton.

Gator In The Spotlight

IS2(SW) Lexine Ta'len

Navy experience: 9 years

Time on board: 4 months

Hometown: Thoreau, N.M.

Why did you decide to enlist in the Navy?

It became hard paying for college. I missed the deadline for financial aid by one day. I went to talk to the ROTC officer about coming in the Navy on active duty status. He gave me this card and pointed me to the nearest MEPS station which was where I grew up.

So, it was originally for money for college, then when I joined I got approved for "A" school. Then after that I thought, I could do this and stay for a while.

What was the biggest surprise for you in boot camp?

The fact that I really had to cut my hair. I didn't want to because it was so long. I could not believe I had to cut it. I couldn't get over that.

What do you like most about being a Intelligence Specialist?

The bigger focus on the ESG mission as a whole. It puts a good twist on the job and makes you think a little harder.

What has been your most memorable moment since you joined the Navy?

I had to go to McMurdo Station, Antarctica to move cargo for the National Science Foundation. We moved metal that they used to build the South Pole dome.

Before the dome was built, there were U.S. flags in a circle. One of the flags was in the middle of the circle, and this flag represented where the pole would be. It was cool to go see that. I also saw penguins and whales in their natural habitat.



USN photo by PH2(AW) Susan Milton.

IS2(SW) Lexine Ta'len loves her job because of the different twist of the Expeditionary Strike Group mission.

What do you do in your spare time? Any hobbies?

I am currently working on my air warfare qualification. I've been working on it since I came on board, but then I took an involuntary two-month break because I went TAD to the USS Carter Hall.

I don't know if it's a hobby but I am hopelessly addicted to online shopping.

What motivates you to get your qualifications completed?

Our qualifications consist of Watch Supervisor, Operations Intelligence around the ship and the AOR,

Geopolitical and Imagery.

I prepare the daily intelligence summary. Knowing it makes your job easier but there is no qualification for any of that, you just need to know it to stay informed and for a thorough future pass down to the next person.

Who is your role model, and why?

My late twin brother, Erick. He advanced quickly to an OS1. He knew his job well and never let little things bother him or sweat the small stuff. And anyone who can just do that everyday is special. He made it look easy.

Bravo Zulu

CMC's Super Sailors Of The Day

3 Mar – AT3 Christopher Dillow (AIMD)
4 Mar – SN Anderson Navarrette (SUP)
5 Mar – RP3 Boyd Peabody (ADMIN)
6 Mar – FC3 Anika Andrada (C5I)
7 Mar – EM3 John Sheffer (ENG)
8 Mar – YN3 Shaquan Gravesford (AIR)
9 Mar – AOAA Gerald Shore (WEPS)
10 Mar – SN Brannon McChesney (DECK)
11 Mar – PCSN Curtis Crutcher (SUPPLY)
12 Mar – MA3 James Razaunaskas (SEC)
13 Mar – ITSN Truong Mai (C5I)
14 Mar – MM3 Daniel Gould (ENG)
15 Mar – AN Nathan College (AIR)
16 Mar – AC3 David Burge (OPS)



Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist

AO1 Wayne Deyette
AD1 Joseph Greathouse
SH1 Peter Matos
CS2 Emmet Bolton
CS2 Brian Cook
MM2 Ramsey Comfort
HT2 Lenton Edgy
BM2 Nicholas Lamere
MR2 Michael Martin
SK2 Mary Renzelman
AO2 Thomas Robinson
EN2 Carroll Roxbury

MM2 Jeremiah Ruley
DC2 Chad Tolman
HT2 Robert Wilcox
MM3 Joseph Coggiano
EM3 Frank Davis
HT3 John Dossey
IS3 Alston Feaster
HT3 Coburn Graham
GM3 Ernest Huizar
EM3 Pedro Jemmott
CS3 Timothy Lewis
EM3 Junior Lubeus
GM3 Demetrius Sullivan
CSSN Jose Lopez
SN Aaron Mitchell
DCFA Anthony Abrao
SA Libby Celleri-Velazques
SN Sammie Conyers
SN Dale Furno
MMFN Elizabeth Guaman
SN Zaid Kadri
SN Jeremy Keith
MMFA Samantha McFarlane
SN Anderson Navarrette
OSSN Samantha Swaim
SN Antonio Wright



Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist

ITC George Alves

ITC Gene Crozier
SH1 Paul Callahan
PS1 Nurudeen Frimpong
IT1 Kelly Johnson
BM1 Wade Lowe
BM1 Gene Peters
SH1 Rodolfo Ricafort
AM1 Daniel Rouch
HM1 Benjamin Russick
IT2 David Childs
BM2 Gregory Drerup
AD2 Gregory Ewing
AC2 Michael Lasley
AE2 Sean Reynolds
AT2 Russel Moldenhauer
AM2 Franklin Smith
AC3 Johnaton Childers
AO3 Jason Hakes
ABH3 Michael Hutchins
ABH3 Mazi Nickelson
ABH3 Leo Paiste
ABHAN Wesley Aumua
AEAN Chad Bennett
ADAN Elvis GomezChavez
ABHAN Erwin Juliano
AN Earvin Lopez
AN Johnny Payanomendez
AN ROMERO
AA Dexter Atkins
AA Michelle Austin

Advanced to PO3

MM3 John Molinari

"New Uniforms from pg. 2"

quire a lot of upkeep compared to BDU's and Sailors will also have more room in their racks since other uniforms are going away," he said.

The BDU-style working uniform is designed to replace seven different styles of current working uniforms. It is made of a near maintenance-free permanent press 50/50 nylon and cotton blend.

Worn with a blue cotton t-shirt, it will include an eight-point cover, a black web belt with closed buckle, and black smooth leather boots, with black suede no-shine boots for optional wear while assigned to non-shipboard commands.

The service uniform for E-6 and below is comprised of a short-sleeve khaki shirt for males and an over-blouse for females, made from wash and wear 75/25 polyester and wool blend, with permanent military creases, black trousers for males with belt-less slacks for females and optional belt-less skirt, and a black unisex garrison cap.

Silver anodized-metal rank insignia will be worn on shirt/blouse collars and cap.

The service uniform will also include a black relaxed-fit Eisenhower-style jacket with a knit stand-up collar and epaulets, on which petty officers will wear silver anodized-metal rank insignia.

"I think the new service uniform looks more professional than the current uniform," said Deck Department's BMSN (SW) Brian J. Theall. "The new uniform adds some color to an office environment compared to our black or white uniforms now."

The new uniforms are not expected to be available for purchase until the late fall of 2007. At that time they will be introduced at Recruit Training Command and then eventually throughout the fleet.

"I'm glad we're condensing our uniforms," said Hazmat's Leading Petty Officer, BM1 (SW) Jeffery J. Carne. "This has been a long time coming."



USN photo by PH2(AW) Susan Milton.

EM3(SW) John Cook is visited by his father, CMDCM (SW/AW) Odie Cook, Command Master Chief for Carrier Air Wing 14 (CVW-14), embarked on board USS Ronald Reagan. EM3 Cook took his father on a tour of the spaces where he works during his father's brief visit on board Nassau.

By JO1(SW) Cindy Gill

Electrician's Mate 3rd Class (SW) John Cook of Engineering's Electrical Division received a very welcome care package while deployed to the Arabian Gulf March 13 – a visit from his father, CMDCM(SW/AW) Odie Cook.

The elder Cook, Command Master Chief for Carrier Air Wing 14 (CVW-14) embarked on board the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN

76), was able to hitch a helicopter ride from Reagan to Nassau to spend a few precious hours with his son. While aboard Nassau, Cook gave his father a tour of the ship while catching up on family news.

A basic staple of any deployment is missing family left at home. Many Sailors come from military families, and a few even serve at the same time. Keeping family close isn't always easy, but from time to time, it's possible.

"I've been trying to get to Nassau

"MCPON," from page 3.

ing its second Battle Efficiency Award, also called the Battle 'E.' It is awarded to ships and aviation squadrons winning the fleet-wide 18-month competitive cycle, which tests all phases of battle readiness.

"I was told when I arrived on board the Nassau that this ship won the Battle 'E,'" said Scott. "I am very pleased that this crew was recognized for all their hard work and devotion.

The Battle 'E' is a great accomplishment, and every Nassau Sailor should be very proud."

Scott's three-hour visit included awards quarters, observing an anchoring evolution on the forecandle and a tour of main propulsion.

"He thought our process of dropping the anchor was cool," said SN James Gist of Deck Department. "I never thought I would ever get to meet him."

Father Travels to Arabian Gulf to Visit Son on NASSAU

for a visit for the last two weeks," said Odie Cook, a 28-year Navy veteran. "Today I was just sitting down to lunch and I got word the helo was ready to go."

Though the tour was brief, John Cook was able to show his father where he spends his days, from the Rewind Shop to the Main Space.

"I brought him to the Tool Issue Room and we sat and listened to music for a bit," said the junior Cook. "There wasn't much time to take him everywhere, so I hit the highlights."

Nassau's command master chief, Rick Makowski said in addition to a brief family visit, geography added a special element.

"It's nice to be able to get (CMDCM Cook) here; especially considering the Reagan is a West Coast ship."

Both father and son were very grateful to everyone who worked hard behind the scenes to make the visit happen if possible.

"The few hours we had were great," said the John Cook. "It was nice to see a family member out in the middle of the Arabian Gulf."

The MCPON's visit is one highlight of this deployment that will be remembered by many Nassau Sailors for a long time.

"His visit increased our Sailor's morale," said ENS David Paul, Supply Department's Wardroom Officer. "Not many Sailors can look forward to receiving their (warfare) pins from the highest enlisted member of the Navy. He took the time and opportunity to do it for Nassau Sailors."